



How to Obtain Healthcare Facility Accreditation Certificate in Nigeria (2026 Complete Guide)

Description

If you operate a hospital, clinic, diagnostic centre, maternity home, dental centre, physiotherapy practice, or specialist medical facility in Nigeria, one of the most commercially valuable approvals you may need is a **Healthcare Facility Accreditation Certificate**.

Why? Because many corporate patients, government programmes, enrollees, insurers, HMOs, and institutional clients prefer or require treatment from **accredited healthcare providers**.

In Nigeria, one of the most recognised federal accreditation pathways for healthcare providers is through the **National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA)**, formerly NHIS. The NHIA accredits healthcare facilities for participation in national health insurance schemes and programmes.

This guide explains **how to obtain Healthcare Facility Accreditation Certificate in Nigeria**, including:

- Official regulators involved
- Step-by-step process
- Requirements
- Inspection procedure
- Costs and hidden expenses

- Timelines
- Common reasons applications fail
- Frequently asked questions

If done correctly, accreditation can increase patient trust, revenue opportunities, HMO partnerships, and long-term business value.

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What is a Healthcare Facility Accreditation Certificate in Nigeria?

A Healthcare Facility Accreditation Certificate is an official approval showing that a hospital or medical facility has met the required operational, staffing, infrastructure, and service delivery standards for participation in regulated healthcare programmes.

In practical terms, it proves that your facility is fit to deliver approved medical services under the relevant scheme.

For many private facilities, the most commercially relevant accreditation in Nigeria is **NHIA Healthcare Provider Accreditation**.

The NHIA maintains lists of accredited healthcare providers and HMOs nationwide.

Which Government Agency Issues It?

Depending on your objective, different agencies may be relevant:

Purpose	Main Regulator
Participation in National Health Insurance	National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA)
Hospital licensing at state level	State Ministry of Health
Diagnostic radiation approvals	NNRA / relevant federal regulators
Drug/pharmacy approvals	Pharmacists Council / NAFDAC
Laboratory standards	MLSCN / relevant authorities

For this article, we focus on the **NHIA Healthcare Facility Accreditation Certificate**, because it is the most searched and commercially important accreditation route.

Who Needs Healthcare Facility Accreditation?

You may need accreditation if you run:

- General hospital
- Specialist hospital
- Primary healthcare centre
- Private clinic
- Maternity home
- Dental clinic
- Eye clinic
- Physiotherapy centre
- Diagnostic centre

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- Medical laboratory (subject to scope)
 - Corporate staff clinic
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Why Healthcare Facilities Seek Accreditation

1. Access to HMO & Insurance Patients

Many enrollees can only use **NHIA-accredited providers**.

2. Increased Revenue Streams

Insurance patients create recurring monthly patient flow.

3. Better Reputation

Accreditation signals regulatory seriousness.

4. Eligibility for Partnerships

Corporate retainerships often prefer accredited hospitals.

5. Expansion Value

Future investors and buyers look favourably on accredited operations.

Legal Basis for NHIA Accreditation

The National Health Insurance Authority operates under the **NHIA Act 2022**, which replaced the former NHIS framework. The Act provides for accreditation and regulation of healthcare providers and quality assurance mechanisms.

Step-by-Step Process: How to Obtain Healthcare Facility Accreditation Certificate in Nigeria

Step 1: Incorporate Your Business Properly

Your hospital or clinic should usually operate through a registered legal entity with CAC documents.

Typical structures:

- Limited Liability Company
- Incorporated Trustees (mission/NGO hospitals)
- Government institution

Step 2: Obtain State Operational License

Before NHIA accreditation, many facilities need valid state licensing/registration to show lawful operation.

Step 3: Prepare Facility Readiness

Your premises, staffing, equipment, departments, records, and sanitation systems should be ready before submission.

Step 4: Submit Application to NHIA

NHIA publishes stepwise procedures for HCF accreditation. Applications are submitted with required documentation for review.

Step 5: Document Verification

Officials assess:

- Ownership records
- Licences
- Staff qualifications
- Equipment list
- Scope of services
- Compliance records

Step 6: Physical Inspection / Accreditation Visit

Inspectors may assess:

- Consultation rooms
- Pharmacy
- Waiting areas
- Wards
- Infection control systems
- Water & power supply
- Records system
- Emergency response capacity

Step 7: Scoring / Compliance Review

Facilities that meet minimum thresholds proceed.

Step 8: Issuance of Accreditation Approval

Successful facilities are listed as accredited providers.

Step 9: Continuous Monitoring & Renewal

Accreditation may require periodic compliance review.

Documents Required for Healthcare Facility Accreditation in Nigeria

While requirements vary by facility type and level, common documents include:

Document	Usually Required
CAC Incorporation Documents	Yes
Tax Identification Number	Yes
State Hospital License	Yes
Medical Director Credentials	Yes
Staff Practicing Licenses	Yes
List of Equipment	Yes
Floor Plan / Premises Details	Often
Utility Readiness Evidence	Often
Infection Control Policy	Often
Waste Disposal Arrangement	Often
Bank Details	Sometimes
Application Letter	Yes

Always confirm current checklist before filing.

Minimum Operational Standards Usually Reviewed

Clinical Personnel

- Doctors
- Nurses
- Pharmacists
- Lab scientists/technicians

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- Records officers
 - Support staff

Infrastructure

- Reception
- Consulting rooms
- Toilets
- Power backup
- Water supply
- Clean environment

Equipment

Depends on scope of practice.

Administration

- Patient records
- Registers
- Billing controls
- Complaint management

Cost of Obtaining Healthcare Facility Accreditation Certificate in Nigeria

Official Fees

Official charges can change depending on:

- Facility category
- Size
- Location

- Inspection needs
- Updated NHIA circulars

Because fee schedules may change, always verify current rates directly before payment.

Hidden Real Costs Most Owners Ignore

Cost Area	Typical Impact
Facility upgrades	High
Licensing backlog	Medium
Missing staff licenses	High
Fire safety corrections	Medium
Water/power improvements	Medium
Compliance consultancy	Medium
Delays from incomplete file	High

Many hospitals underestimate these costs.

Processing Timeline

Stage	Estimated Time
Documentation Prep	1–4 weeks
Submission Review	2–6 weeks
Inspection Scheduling	2–8 weeks
Rectification (if needed)	Variable
Final Approval	Depends on compliance

Total realistic timeline: **1 to 4 months** depending on readiness.

Why Many Applications Fail

1. Applying Before Facility is Ready

Some clinics apply while still under construction.

2. Unlicensed Staff

Expired MDCN, NMCN, PCN, MLSCN or other professional licenses create red flags.

3. Poor Record Keeping

No patient registers or proper files.

4. Inadequate Power & Water

Critical for medical operations.

5. Wrong Scope Claims

Applying as secondary-level facility when only primary-level capacity exists.

6. Poor Hygiene / Infection Control

Inspectors notice quickly.

7. Incomplete Documentation

The most common avoidable problem.

How to Improve Approval Chances

Conduct a Mock Audit First

Review your facility like inspectors would.

Verify Staff Licenses

Renew before filing.

Upgrade Weak Departments

Especially pharmacy, records, sanitation.

Use Correct Facility Category

Don't overstate capacity.

Submit Professionally Organized Application

Presentation matters.

Common Misconceptions

“Once I register with CAC, I can get accredited immediately.”

False. Corporate registration alone is not enough.

“Small clinics cannot qualify.”

False. Smaller facilities may qualify depending on category and readiness.

“Accreditation lasts forever.”

False. Compliance can be reviewed periodically.

“Any building can become a hospital.”

False. Premises suitability matters.

Frequently Asked Questions (People Also Ask)

Is Healthcare Facility Accreditation compulsory in Nigeria?

Depends on the service you want to offer. For NHIA participation, accreditation is essential.

Can a new hospital apply?

Yes, if operationally ready and properly licensed.

How much is NHIA accreditation fee?

Fees may vary and may be updated administratively. Confirm current schedule before filing.

How long does it take?

Usually 1-4 months depending on readiness.

Can a diagnostic centre apply?

Possibly, depending on scope and programme category.

Can accreditation be revoked?

Yes, where standards are breached.

Is NHIA the same as NHIS?

NHIA replaced NHIS under the 2022 Act.

Strategic Advice for Hospital Owners

Do not treat accreditation as a mere paperwork exercise.

It is a **business growth instrument**.

Facilities that prepare properly often gain:

- More patients
- Insurance traffic
- Better reputation
- Higher valuation
- Stronger partnerships

Facilities that rush the process often face delays, repeat inspections, and wasted funds.

Final Thoughts

If you want to know **how to obtain Healthcare Facility Accreditation Certificate in Nigeria**, the real answer is simple:

Compliance first, paperwork second.

Most delays happen because facilities focus on forms rather than operational readiness.

The smartest route is to first assess your hospital, identify weak points, structure documentation properly, then submit a regulator-ready application.

That approach saves time, reduces rejection risk, and improves approval chances significantly.

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